

Serial No. To be Assigned
Filed: May 10, 2005

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1. (currently amended) A pattern forming method ~~which is characterized in~~ comprising the steps of:

[1] ~~a step of~~ applying on a substrate material a photosensitive composition comprising (a) an alkali-soluble resin, (b) a photosensitizer having a quinone diazide group, (c) a photo acid generator, (d) a crosslinking agent and (e) a solvent to form a photosensitive layer[[,]]; and then

[2] ~~a step of~~ exposing the photosensitive layer in light through a mask[[,]]; and then

[3] ~~a step of~~ removing said exposed area by development to form a positive image[[,]]; and then

[4] ~~a step of~~ exposing a whole area of the positive image to light.

2. (currently amended) The pattern forming method ~~which is characterized in that in the pattern forming method according to claim 1[[,]] wherein~~ (b) [[a]] the photosensitizer having a quinone diazide group and (c) [[a]] the photo acid generator have an absorption activity at the same exposure wavelength and the whole area exposure is conducted at the exposure wavelength where both the photosensitizer and the photo acid photo acid generator have an absorption activity.

3. (currently amended) A pattern forming method ~~which is characterized in~~ comprising the steps of:

[1] ~~a step of~~ applying on a substrate material a photosensitive composition comprising (a) an alkali-soluble resin, (f) a compound having a quinone diazide group and functioning as

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a photosensitizer and a ~~photo-acid~~ photo acid generator, (d) a crosslinking agent and (e) a solvent to form a photosensitive layer[[.]];

[2] a step of exposing the photosensitive layer in light through a mask[[.]];

[3] a step of removing said exposed area by development to form a positive image[[.]];
and then

[4] a step of exposing a whole area of the positive image to light.

4. (currently amended) The [[A]] pattern forming method according to ~~any one of claims~~ claim 1 to 3, which is ~~characterized in that~~ further comprises step [5] [[a]] heat treatment (post-baking) which is carried out after the whole area exposure step described before.

5. (currently amended) A pattern forming method according to ~~any one of claims~~ claim 1 to 4, ~~wherein~~ which is characterized in that said (a) the alkali-soluble resin is at least one species selected from the group consisting of novolak resin, polyvinyl phenolic resins and acrylic resins.

6. (currently amended) A pattern forming method according to ~~any one of claims~~ claim 1 to 5, ~~which is characterized in that~~ wherein the mask used at in [2] the exposure step described before is a mask having a half-tone region which is partially made 10 to 90 % of transmittance at a light transmission region being equipped with a semi-transparent film or installing a slit or a mesh having a dimension of not more than a resolution of the exposure device.

7. (new) The pattern forming method according to claim 2, which further comprises step [5] heat treatment (post-baking) which is carried out after the whole area exposure step.

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8. (new) The pattern forming method according to claim 3, which further comprises step [5] heat treatment (post-baking) which is carried out after the whole area exposure step.

9. (new) A pattern forming method according to claim 2, wherein (a) the alkali-soluble resin is at least one species selected from the group consisting of novolak resin, polyvinyl phenolic resins and acrylic resins.

10. (new) A pattern forming method according to claim 3, wherein (a) the alkali-soluble resin is at least one species selected from the group consisting of novolak resin, polyvinyl phenolic resins and acrylic resins.

11. (new) A pattern forming method according to claim 4, wherein (a) the alkali-soluble resin is at least one species selected from the group consisting of novolak resin, polyvinyl phenolic resins and acrylic resins.

12. (new) A pattern forming method according to claim 2, wherein the mask used in [2] the exposure step is a mask having a half-tone region which is partially made 10 to 90 % of transmittance at a light transmission region being equipped with a semi-transparent film or installing a slit or a mesh having a dimension of not more than a resolution of the exposure device.

13. (new) A pattern forming method according to claim 3, wherein the mask used in [2] the exposure step is a mask having a half-tone region which is partially made 10 to 90 % of transmittance at a light transmission region being equipped with a semi-transparent

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film or installing a slit or a mesh having a dimension of not more than a resolution of the exposure device.

14. (new) A pattern forming method according to claim 4, wherein the mask used in [2] the exposure step is a mask having a half-tone region which is partially made 10 to 90 % of transmittance at a light transmission region being equipped with a semi-transparent film or installing a slit or a mesh having a dimension of not more than a resolution of the exposure device.

15. (new) A pattern forming method according to claim 5, wherein the mask used in [2] the exposure step is a mask having a half-tone region which is partially made 10 to 90 % of transmittance at a light transmission region being equipped with a semi-transparent film or installing a slit or a mesh having a dimension of not more than a resolution of the exposure device.

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